

Memo from
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Small X-Ray Dosage Is Reported Capable Of Genetic Damage

NY Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 7—The Public Health Service says that X-Ray radiation levels lower than previously believed can cause genetic damage.

It has been known that X-ray radiation in large amounts can cause genetic damage, and many scientists have maintained that smaller amounts might also cause genetic damage.

The health agency said Thursday its warning was based on a joint study conducted with the American College of Radiology's Commission on Radiologic Units, Standards and Protection.

The study said that sound theoretical considerations suggested that even small amounts of radiation exposure to the gonads could adversely affect

the genetic inheritance of future generations.

Although no significant somatic change has been demonstrated in adults as a result of the low doses incurred in diagnostic radiology, the report said, there is laboratory evidence that even these levels of radiation might affect some cells.

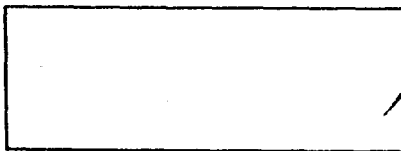
However, several epidemiological studies suggest that special consideration must be given to the relatively high radiosensitivity of the fetus, particularly during the early phases of pregnancy.

The report placed the genetically significant X-ray dosage—that at which genetic damage could result—at 55 millirads. This level is commonly transmitted to patients during X-ray examinations.

The report said that failure to limit the X-ray beam to the size of the film or fluoroscopic screen used was the major identifiable cause of unnecessary exposure.

Is this correctly reported? What does the underlined expression mean?

Is it a garbled attribution of the empirical measurement of the intensity of gonadal irradiation in the population survey(s)? If so, which one; and doesn't such a garble warrant correction by the press?



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BCC Harry Schwartz
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